

THE OCEAN CURRENTS

TREND OF THOSE IN THE ARCTIC TO BE DETERMINED.

Philadelphia Geographical Society Makes an Assault Upon the Problem of Discovering the North Pole—To Experiment with Floating Casks.

The Geographical Society of Philadelphia is fairly embarked upon its latest assault upon the problem of discovering the north pole. This is one of the most important ventures in geographical discovery initiated in recent years. It contemplates the determination of the direction or trend of the oceanic currents of the arctic region, for the purpose of ascertaining the conditions of drift which there prevail.

The latest polar exploration originated in the course of the ill-fated Jeannette expedition and the later and more successful drift of the Fram, under command of Nansen in his farthest north expedition. The present project for the determination of polar drift was conceived by Rear Admiral George W. Melville, engineer in chief of the United States navy, who was an officer of the Jeannette expedition. After the disaster that overtook the Jeannette Melville was deputed to search for the lost bodies on the shores of northern Siberia. The severe experiences of Melville during these perilous expeditions were not without results that bid fair to contribute important knowledge to the problem that has thus far baffled the researches of geographical science and cost many lives during the past 300 years. For Melville believes that through observation made then the pole will be ultimately reached.

In a paper read before the American Philosophical Society late in 1897 Rear Admiral Melville outlined his plan of search. He proposed the construction of small, strong casks, designed to meet the requirements of a long drift between arctic floes, possibly of three or four years' duration. He suggested that these casks be built of heavy oak staves, with conical ends, and encircled with steel bars, in order to resist the utmost pressure of ice.

The Geographical Society of Philadelphia undertook to carry out Rear Admiral Melville's novel proposal. For more than a year the society has been engaged upon the execution of the plan. Fifty casks have been constructed in San Francisco, under the super-

BURNING OF THE WINDSOR HOTEL IN NEW YORK CITY.



the polar floe are about the size of an ordinary beer keg, but with conical rooded ends of brass. Each cask will contain a glass tube, into which will be inserted a memorandum of the locality of the placing the casks in the drift, with blank instruction in several languages, requesting the finder, wherever the casks may be drifted, to inscribe on the memorandum the location by latitude and longitude of the find, and with the request to forward this information to the nearest consular representative of the finder's country, or direct to the Geographical Society of Philadelphia. Each glass tube is inclosed in a small wooden trough, which will be placed through the bung-hole of

serene atmosphere, but opposite to a thin vaporous cloud, if a human being stand on a high hill between them, a wonderful image is seen on the cloud-curtain, moving as the man moves, at one moment clear and the next fading away. This is a kind of natural magic lantern, where the cloud takes the place of the white screen, and a man, or men, of the slides. The highest peak of the Hariz Mountains, called the Brocken, is the place where this is often seen, so the image is called the spectre of the Brocken. But mountaineers see it often on the high Alps. The changing rays of the morning sun make the giant shadows vanish and reappear, and the moving cloud-screen gives them motion.

WHEN THE CENTURY BEGINS.

It Was a Fruitful Topic of Discussion One Hundred Years Ago.

An immense amount of discussion is current as to the exact time when the present century ends, and the next one begins. Some very clever arguments have been advanced on various phases of the subject. The reader who follows up all of these will be rewarded with a vast amount of curious information. With the great deal that is speculative and purely theoretical, some most curious and bewildering propositions are brought to the front. A good deal of this is new to the person who has not reflected over the matter before. All that is being gone over, however, is old, thrashed material. As the

ing his face to the south he would say: "I am now 1,800 miles from the city hall of New York."

But if he had put the stone numbered 1 at the city hall, then the stone to be placed at one mile, from the said corner would have been marked 2, and the stone marked 1,800 only 1,799 miles from New York. But placing the stone marked 1 at the said corner would surely mislead the traveler in determination of how far he was from New York, for seeing 2 marked on the stone he would conclude that he had still two miles to traverse to be at the New York city hall.

A Sure Stand.
The following story of a really smart retort is from "More Humors of Cler-

ELECTROCUTION OF A WOMAN.

Mrs. Place, the First Woman in the World to Die in the Electric Chair.

The law is not a respecter of skirts. It makes no distinction of sex. The electric chair was not made for men alone, for the statute which prescribes death as a penalty for deliberate murder does not say that its provisions shall be inoperative if the criminal happens to be a woman.

But the law's machinery seems to get out of gear when a woman is involved. A sentiment that has its inception in the purity of woman is held up to protect the most degraded of the sex. Are the female criminals of the lower classes, it is argued that their very degradation precludes their realization of the enormity of the offense; if of the educated and well-to-do, then it cannot be that they would knowingly commit the crime. Insanity is pleaded in excuse. These influences usually have the desired effect on jurors and acquittal or a penalty altogether inadequate is the result. Should the jury fail to be influenced, then the higher courts and the Governor's pardoning or commuting power are appealed to. At some one of these various stages the murderer usually is saved.

Only twice in fifty years have women been executed in New York State. In both cases strenuous efforts were made to save them, but their crimes were so heinous that mercy could not be successfully invoked in their behalf. These two were Roxalana Druse, hanged in Herkimer in 1857, and Martha Place, whose execution at Sing Sing was the first infliction of the death penalty upon a woman in the electric chair.

In the former case the victim went sobbing, moaning and shrieking to the gallows. Her screams resounded



MRS. MARTHA PLACE.

through the jail corridors. She feared death. Mrs. Place was different. Her death scene was lacking in sensational features. There was no noise, no manifestation of terror. A plea for heavenly mercy were the only words that broke the stillness of the death chamber. Her execution was no more revolting than if the victim had been a man.

But it had unusual features, most notable of which was the presence of two women who had come upon the warden's request. One was Dr. Jennie Griffin, of Troy, who accepted an invitation because Gov. Roosevelt had said that a woman physician should be present, and the other, Miss Mary Meury, of Brooklyn, who had befriended Mrs. Place while in jail and who witnessed the painful ordeal because the condemned woman wanted her to be with her to the last.

Mrs. Place murdered her step-daughter in a most heinous manner and made an almost successful attempt on the life of her husband. She was convicted of murder in the first degree and sentenced to be executed in August, 1898. Her execution was stayed by an appeal to the Court of Appeals for a new trial. It was denied and March 20 was set as the new date of her execution. Then from New York came a protest against the execution of a woman. Gov. Roosevelt was appealed to. He said if she was insane he would save her life and had a commission appointed to examine her. They reported that she was sane and Roosevelt said then the law must take its course.

Couldn't Run Away.
There are times in war when one active brain is equivalent to a great many guns. Witness this incident of the German revolution of 1848, told to the Tribune by a German-American citizen of New York:

We were short of men, and had a large number of prisoners to look after. That did not worry us as long as we were not moving, but one day we had to make a forced march.

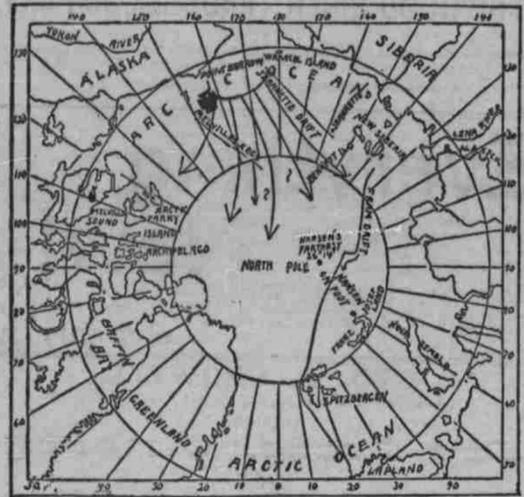
The country through which we were to pass was hostile, and extreme watchfulness was necessary. We had few enough men as it was, and we knew that our prisoners were ready to run at the first opening.

Finally a young officer made a brilliant suggestion, and it was promptly carried out. We ripped the suspender buttons from the prisoners' trousers, took away their belts, and knew we had them. Their hands were busy after that, and fast running was out of the question.

We made the march safely, and I do not believe that even Yankee ingenuity could have invented a simpler solution.

Sausage Day.
The butchers of Berlin have a curious way of informing their customers of the days on which fresh sausages are made by placing a chair, covered with a large clean apron, at the side of the shop door.

Chapel Built of Coral.
One of the curiosities of the Isle of Mahe, in the Indian ocean, is the chapel that is built of coral.



MAP OF POLAR SEA, SCENE OF MELVILLE'S LATEST EXPERIMENT.

intendence of Past Chief Engineer George F. Kutz, U. S. N., an officer who is well acquainted with Melville's plans. Specially prepared messages, to be placed inside the casks, are now en route across the continent. In a few days these messages will be inclosed in the casks and the northern journey will begin. By means of Pacific whaling fleets, whose co-operation has been generously granted to the society, and also by the United States cutter Bear, acting for the United States hydrographic service, the casks will be shipped northward. Of the fifty, twenty-five of them will be carried by the steam whalers of the Pacific Steam Whaling Company, fifteen by the revenue cutter Bear and ten by whalers owned by George Siebers & Co. During the next year it is contemplated to send fifty additional casks.

To Determine Polar Drifts.
The plan of operation, so far as can be determined at present, is to deposit these casks on ice floes, north of both the American and the Asiatic continents, for the purpose of determining the polar drifts. These drifts are believed by many geographers to pass in opposed directions, one northward from the Siberian coast, and which is assumed to correspond with the drift of the Fram; the other northeastward from the archipelago lying north of America and issuing eastward in the sea that lies west of Greenland.

Henry G. Bryant, the present President of the Geographical Society of

the cask and the hole will be securely closed.

DWELL IN A STUMP.
Queer Living Quarters of Five Men in Southern Australia.

Sometimes the rodents and the birds make homes in tree stumps, but man has usually selected different quarters.



THE STUMP HOUSE.

In the township of Wynnassy, South Gippsland, Australia, however, five men have converted a huge gumtree stump into a very habitable dwelling. This queer home is two stories high, the upper story being reached by a regular stairway. A glance at the accompanying picture of the stump house will convince you that the tree must have been a giant of its species.

Wonders of Nature.
If two pieces of looking-glass are held on the opposite sides of a lighted lamp or candle, an endless series of bright flames may be seen at one time. So, in the cold north, when the air is full of minute floating ice-flakes, the sun with its halo is reflected many times, and the traveler sees two, four or more mock suns with crossing halos of startling patterns. In hilly countries, where the sun rises in a

LEWIS CARROLL.

Peculiarities of the Author of "Alice in Wonderland."

S. D. Collingwood, in the Century, describes some of the odd ways of Lewis Carroll, the author of "Alice in Wonderland."

That he was, in some respects, eccentric cannot be denied; for instance, he never wore an overcoat, and always wore a tall hat, whatever might be the climatic conditions. He would wear only cotton gloves. In these small personal matters he had a great fear of extravagance. At dinner in his rooms small pieces of cardboard took the place of table-mats; they answered the purpose perfectly well, he said, and to buy anything else would be a mere waste of money.

On the other hand, when purchasing books for himself, or giving treats to the children he loved, he never seemed to consider expense at all.

When making tea for his friends he used—in order, I suppose, to expedite the process—to walk up and down the room waving the teapot about, and telling meanwhile those delightful anecdotes of which he had an inexhaustible supply.

He had a strong objection to staring colors in dress, his favorite combination being pink and gray. One little girl who came to stay with him was absolutely forbidden to wear a red frock, of a somewhat pronounced hue, while out in his company.

At meals he was always very abstemious, while he took nothing in the middle of the day except a glass of wine and a biscuit. Under these circumstances it is not very surprising that the healthy appetites of his little friends filled him with wonder, and even with alarm.

When he took a certain one of them out with him to a friend's house to dinner he used to give the host or hostess a gentle warning, to the mixed amazement and indignation of the child; "Please be careful, because she eats a good deal too much."

Two Valid Excuses.

Last week, late in the afternoon, a case was called by Judge Sutherland in County Court.

"I would like to ask, your Honor, that this case go over until to-morrow," said one of the attorneys.

"On what ground?" said the Judge. "Too tired."

"Yes, your Honor. I have been arguing a case all day in Part II, and I am really too fatigued to go on with this trial."

"Very well, let the case go over. Call the next case."

The next case was called and another attorney arose.

"May it please your Honor, I would like to ask this case to go over."

"For what reason?"
"I am too tired."
"You, too? What makes you tired?"
"I have been listening all day to my learned friend in Part II."—Rochester Herald.

When a girl of sixteen, who is pretty, and has good clothes, gets a sad look in her eyes, it means that she has heard it is becoming; nothing more.

The Bible tells us God created man in His own image—and nearly every man thinks he is the one referred to.



end of each century approaches the old, old question is mooted, people get thinking and naturally the same ideas that presented to their great grand-grandparents appeal to them with the first blush of something original.

A century since, as the year 1800 approached, the prints then current were filled with a good deal of discussion as to whether 1800 or 1801 signified the beginning of a new century. One of the most entertaining and interesting papers on this subject is comprised in a letter written by Gen. Philip Schuyler of historic fame, Feb. 11, 1779. It is addressed to his eldest daughter, Mrs. Angelica Church, and was indited to set at rest in her mind the baffling pros and cons concerning the century-ending ideas. At that time men of sound sense, and of such candor as to be incapable of subterfuge which cavilling about words affords, held antagonistic views as stubbornly as though millions were involved.

Gen. Schuyler promised everything on the fact that the birth of Christ, beginning at the first minute of the first day of January, computation commences with a cipher 0. Some theorists placed 1 at the birth of Christ, instead of at the end of the year from his birth, rejecting, he claimed, an entire year out of the series composing the Christian era. Here is his quaint, practical proposition to illustrate:

Suppose, he says, a surveyor was directed to begin at the city hall, New York, to measure on a due north course, 1,800 miles, and at the end of a mile to set up a stone to indicate how far that stone was from the city hall, what mark would he place upon it? Surely he would mark it with the number 1. If he should proceed one mile farther, and set up another stone, this he would mark with the number 2, and proceeding thus, when he had run 1,800 times eighty chains he would set up a stone and mark it 1,800, and, turn-

cal Life," and is told in connection with a church in one of the eastern counties of England:

The church possessed a valuable Bible, which was used only on Sundays. During the week it was kept in a box which rather curiously formed the stand upon which the reader of the lessons stood. On one occasion, when this was being shown to a visitor, the remark was made that it did not seem very reverent for even a clergyman to tread upon the Bible.

"Pardon me," the old verger replied. "In this church, sir, we take our stand upon the Scriptures."

Sitting Bull's Grave.

A broken wooden headboard and a neglected mound of earth in the Fort Yates, N. D., military cemetery mark the resting place of Sitting Bull, the great Sioux medicine man whose wily brain planned the deathtrap of the Little Big Horn into which General Custer's command fell. On the broken headboard is written: "No. 54. Sitting Bull, Indian." Relic hunters have cut most of the headboard away.

The Devil in a Candlestick.
An odd candlestick is in bronze of the brilliant flaming red always assumed by Mephistopheles in masquerade. It represents his satanic majesty in all the familiar brilliancy, with horns and cloven foot, the latter serving as a standard. The tail is curved into a loop handle for the candlestick and the candle itself, of the same flaming red wax, fits between the horns.

When the sons of a great church worker show no inclination to study for the ministry, she begins to build her hopes on one of her daughters marrying a preacher.

Love finds the way in, but it has to be thrown out.



ONE OF THE DRIFT CASES.

Philadelphia, has generously contributed to the society the funds needed to carry this novel polar expedition into immediate execution. Mr. Bryant is a graduate of Princeton University. He is an explorer of wide experience and is at present on an extended voyage in the West Indies. The casks which will be sent through